activities. However, it awards certain categories of works/jobs to Contractors through Job/Service contracts. The contractors of ONGC are required to pay not less than minimum wages, as notified by the Regional Labour Commissioner (RLC), Ahmedabad, for the State of Gujarat. In addition to minimum wages and additional wages, the labourers deployed by contractors are provided coverage under Employees Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Payments Act, 1952, Bonus under the payments of Bonus Act, 1965, Leave with wages, Kits and Liveries and Insurance for workmens' compensation liability.

Visit of domestic and foreign tourists in India

†*120. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the number of domestic and foreign tourists during January, 2007 to January, 2008 and January, 2008 to January, 2009, separately;

(b) whether the number of tourists has declined during 2008-09; and

(c) the measures taken by Government to encourage tourism?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) during January 2007 to January 2008 and January 2008 to January 2009 were 5.67 million and 5.85 million respectively. The number of domestic tourist visits during January to December 2007 was 527 million. The data on domestic tourist visits for 2008 and January 2009 are not available.

Though the growth rate in FTAs in 2008 over 2007 was lower (5.6%) as compared to that of 14.3% in 2007 over 2006, the total number of FTAs in 2008 was 5.37 million which is higher than the FTAs of 5.08 million in 2007. The lower growth rate in 2008, particularly in November and December, may be due to various reasons including global financial meltdown and terrorist activities.

(c) Development and promotion of tourism is primarily undertaken by the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations. However, to supplement the efforts of the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations, and to encourage tourism, the Ministry of Tourism *inter-alia* takes the following steps:

- Development of tourism infrastructure at tourist sites with the cooperation of other Ministries/ Departments and State/ UT Governments;
- Focusing on growth of hotel infrastructure, particularly that for budget hotels;
- Enhancing connectivity through augmentation of air capacity and improving road infrastructure to major tourist attractions;
- Direct approach to the consumers through electronic and print media through the "Incredible India" Campaign;
- Production and distribution of publicity material;
- Direct co-operative marketing with the airlines, tour operators and wholesalers in overseas markets;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- According greater focus to the emerging markets, particularly of China, North East Asia and South East Asia;
- Participation in Trade Fairs and Exhibitions;
- Use of internet and web marketing; and
- Re-inforced hospitality programmes including grant of air passages to invite media personnel, tour operators on familiarization tours to India to get first hand knowledge on various tourism products.

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WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Merger of Jet and Kingfisher

707. SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Jet Airways and Kingfisher are going for a merger;

(b) whether there would be any impact on Air India's market if such merger takes place; and

(c) if so, what would the action plan of Air India to address such a situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No such proposal has been received.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Flights from Dabolim airport

708. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the number of flights operating from Dabolim Airport in Goa to foreign countries, sector-wise and country-wise;

(b) whether Air India or other airlines propose to operate any new flight from Goa to any of the foreign countries; and

(c) if so, the route of these flights and by which date these flights are going to be operational?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Presently, Sri Lankan Airlines, Condor Airlines and Transaero Airlines provide 3, 2 and 5 services a week from Colombo, Frankfurt and Moscow/St Petersburg to Goa respectively. Air India has 5 and 3 services a week on the Bangalore - Goa - Dubai and Chennai - Goa - Kuwait sectors respectively. Apart from these, any authorised carrier can provide connectivity to tourists by international charter flights to/from Goa.

(b) and (c) Goa is available as a point of call to the designated airline(s) of 14 countries apart from the Indian carriers operating to international destinations. However, actual operation by airlines is guided by their commercial judgment.